

Hearing, Understanding, and Accepting

As a terebinth, and as an oak, whose stock remains when they are felled;
so the holy seed is its stock. – Isaiah 6:13

[Matthew 13:1-23] On that day Jesus went out of the house, sat by the seaside, and again he began to teach. Great multitudes gathered to him, so that he entered into a boat, and sat, and all the multitude stood on the beach. He spoke to them many things in parables, saying, “Behold, a farmer went out to sow. As he sowed, some seeds fell by the roadside, *and it was trampled under foot* and the birds of the sky came and devoured them. Others fell on rocky ground, where they didn’t have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of earth. When the sun had risen, they were scorched. Because they had no root, *and had no moisture* they withered away. Others fell among thorns. The thorns grew up and choked them and [they] yielded no fruit. Others fell on good soil, and yielded fruit: some one hundred times as much, some sixty, and some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

When he was alone the disciples came, and said to him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?”

He answered them, “To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to those who are outside it is not given to them. For whoever has, to him will be given, and he will have abundance, but whoever doesn’t have, from him will be taken away even that which he has. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they don’t see, and hearing, they don’t hear, neither do they understand. In them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says,

‘By hearing you will hear,
and will in no way understand;
Seeing you will see,
and will in no way perceive:

This is he who
...bears fruit

for this people’s heart has grown callous,
their ears are dull of hearing,
they have closed their eyes;
or else perhaps they might perceive
with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their heart,
and should turn again;
and I would heal them.’ [Isaiah 6:9-10]

“But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For most certainly I tell you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which you see, and didn’t see them; and to hear the things which you hear, and didn’t hear them.” He said to them, “Don’t you understand this parable? How will you understand all of the parables? Hear, then, the parable of the farmer. When anyone hears the word of the Kingdom, and doesn’t understand it Satan, the evil one, comes and snatches away that which has been sown in his heart *that [he] may not believe and be saved*. This is what was sown by the roadside. What was sown on the rocky places, this is he who hears the word, and immediately with joy receives it; yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while. *And in time of temptation* when oppression or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. What was sown among the thorns, this is he who hears the word, but the cares *and pleasures* of this age, and the deceitfulness of riches the lusts of other things entering in choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful, *and brings no fruit to maturity*. What was sown on the good ground, this is he who hears the word, and understands it, *and accepts it*; who most certainly bears fruit *with patience*, and brings forth, some one hundred times as much, some sixty, and some thirty.” [Mark 4:1-20, Luke 8:1-15]

1. Why did Jesus tell parables? To what end did Isaiah preach? Why does God do this?
2. When was a “time of temptation”? What are your cares? What can you do to bear fruit?
3. Jesus, I want to bear the fruit of right-living and kingdom growth; I’ll be patient to...

